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000 the rest of our party. We saw nothing except one ostrich vanishing at great speed towards the valley at another point, and a pair of doves, which I remarked with interest; so we returned to the track, and as night was closing in, pushed on, wishing to cross the ford of the river and encamp on the other side. At seven o'clock, having reached a nice spring flowing from the barranca, where there was firewood in profusion, Gallegos ordered a halt, although Sam wished to proceed, observing that the moon was so bright it was 'all the same as day.' We accordingly encamped for the night, after making a good supper off guanaco meat, which was a pleasant change after our previous charqui. The valley of
133 the Cuheyli slightly indicates the bench formation, though it does not present so distinctly marked terraces as those which border the Gallegos River; but the lowest or river plain, which is nearly two leagues wide in the neighbourhood of the ford, is of a more fertile character, the pasture being luxuriant and good. One or two of the springs—notably the one the water of which, contrary to our guide's advice and example, we drank—had a strong taste of iron, which caused all the party to suffer from internal derange-
386 ment; and Sam stated that near our encampment there was a deposit of the black earth with which the Indians paint
000 their bodies. Starting early, after a night of severe frost, we soon struck the ford. Our guide had vanished; but while rearranging the packs, we saw a volume of black smoke rising to the east, caused by Sam, who, having thus signalled his countrymen, rejoined us on the march across the slightly ascending plain. We then observed numerous
492 Indians galloping in our direction, and crossing the stream at various parts, as J'aria remarked, quite regardless of fords. We halted, and were soon surrounded by about forty or more, most of them riding useful-looking horses barebacked.
● 609 As they appeared very friendly, Gallegos gave them some biscuit and charqui; their chiefs—the head cacique being a nephew of Casimiro—forming them into a semicircle, in tolerably good order, to receive the present.

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to barter for more useful and innocent luxuries as well as necessaries. There is no doubt that in the event of the future development of this settlement, it might serve as a *point d'appui* to raise the Tehuelches to the level of a more cultivated and settled mode of existence; but speculations on this point are not within my province, and it is time to introduce the members of the party with whom my winter was agreeably spent on the island of Pabon. With Don Luiz P. Buena and his amiable and accomplished señora I subsequently made acquaintance, which ripened into friendship; but though his guest, I was at present personally unknown to him. In his absence, his representative, Mr. Clarke, who, as already mentioned, was an old acquaintance, did all he could to make me feel at home. He was a handsome young fellow of twenty-five, and an excellent specimen of the versatile and cosmopolitan New Englander 'raised' in Salem, Massachusetts, where he had been brought up as a builder, though he afterwards 'shipped himself on board of a ship.' In his nautical life he had been mate of the Snow Squall, in a homeward voyage from Shanghai, when she was chased off the Cape of Good Hope by the Alabama, and but for the pluck of the captain and crew, and the wonderful sailing powers of the craft, another item would have been added to Mr. Adams's 'little bill.' As it was, the beautiful vessel fairly outsailed the swift steamer. The steadiness of the crew, and their well-deserved attachment to the captain, were most strongly proved on this occasion. As there was no alternative between putting in for water at St. Helena—where it was too probable the Alabama would pounce upon the prize—and running home upon half a pint per diem each man, the captain left it to the crew to decide, and they chose the latter course.

Mr. Clarke had spent three months travelling and hunting in company with the Tehuelches, which had made him a most expert hand with lazo or bolas, and well acquainted with the Indian character; and it was pleasant to hear that

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he entertained a very high opinion of their intelligence and generous dispositions. He treated them with fairness and considerate kindness, and they repaid him by confidence and friendship.

Five other *employés* made up the rest of our party. No social distinctions, however, prevailed, and the inhabitants of Pabon lived in pleasant equality. The charge of the dogs and horses, and the duty of supplying meat, devolved on two: Gonzalez, a goucha, a native of Patagones, who was as much at home in the schooner on a sealing excursion, as in the saddle balling an ostrich; and Juan Isidoro, a swarthy little man whose sparkling black eyes told of his Indian blood, a native of Santiago del Estero; he had been sent as a soldier to Rio Negro, whence he had managed to desert, and make his way with Orkeke's Indians to the settlement. Next comes Juan Chileno, a bright, fresh-complexioned youth of nineteen years, to look at whom was refreshing, after the swarthy and weather-beaten physiognomies of the others. Then Antonio, a Portuguese, by turns gaucho, whaler, or sealer, always ready with a song or a merry jest, and on occasion equally quick with his knife. Holstein furnished the last, but by no means least important; a strong-built, good-natured, rather stupid fellow, generally selected as the butt of the rest, who always styled him 'El Cookè,' a sobriquet earned by his many voyages in that capacity on board various ships. Curiously enough, he proved to possess information on a topic to me of great interest, as he had been one of a party which, about a year previous to my visit, had ascended the river Santa Cruz to its source. The expedition was organised by an American well acquainted with the Californian mining, who proposed to explore the mineral resources of the valley. Unfortunately, during the ascent of the river, a quarrel broke out, and the American left the others, and found his way alone to the Indians, thence returning to Santa Cruz. The loss of the only man capable of scientific observation rendered their

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The effect of the river ice piled up on the shore by the tides was very striking. Huge floes had accumulated to the height of fifteen feet and upwards, and besides rendering the passage difficult, had buried the carefully-stacked wood-pile under a small mountain of ice. This was in the comparatively sheltered valley. On the Pampas, when the fierce south wind blew, as it almost invariably did, it seemed impossible to face it and live. One attempt made nearly resulted in Gonzalez being overcome by the sleep which is the forerunner of death, and the horses of all the party absolutely could not advance. The snow lay eighteen inches deep, and we had flattered ourselves that the guanaco and ostrich would prove an easy prey. *They* could not run—but *we* could not chase, and were thankful to make our way, slowly and laboriously, down from the desolate and storm-swept Pampas.

The Indians from the Rio Chico occasionally visited us, and Orkeke's objection to my company was gradually giving way. He had probably feared that an English Señor would require a considerable amount of attention, and give constant trouble; but during our intercourse he found that the stranger could (and did) groom his own horse, and wait on himself generally, as well as take his part in whatever was being done, even to sleeping out with no shelter but the ample guanaco mantle. Casimiro also, according to promise, visited the camp, and argued in my favour, finally obtaining from the chief a somewhat reluctant permission for me to join his party. Towards the end of July some of his Indians had come to the settlement to inform us that the scarcity of game in their vicinity had compelled them to shift their quarters to a place higher up the Kio Chico. They anxiously inquired if the schooner had arrived; we were as eagerly looking for her, but day after day passed, and the looked-for boat did not appear.

On the 24th of July everybody had gone hunting, except Juan Chileno (who was cook for the week), and myself, whom a hurt received in my foot had compelled to remain

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bought a horse, or rather exchanged away a revolver for one 484
(a three year old, newly broken), and started in company with Orkeke, Campan, Cayuke, and Tankelow, four Indians, all of whom were previous acquaintances. Casimiro followed with his family, taking one of the horses from Santa Cruz to assist in the transport of his household. This horse was one I had been accustomed to ride in Santa Cruz, and on arriving at the Indian camp was lent me as a second horse. Shortly after passing the first hills on the northern side, our party not being burdened with women and children, started off at a hand canter, which was kept up until a puma suddenly sprang out of a bush, when chase was immediately given; he, however, got into a thick tangle of incense bushes, from which we tried in vain to dislodge him, and although pelted with stones he lay there spitting like a great cat. Cayuke wished to fire the bush, but Orkeke would not waste time, so we mounted and proceeded on our journey. We continued riding over plains and ridges until about four P.M., when we reached a large laguna, close to which grew some high coarse grass and shrubs; here several ostriches were started, and one killed by Orkeke. On reaching the range of hills before described as the southern barrier of the valley of the Rio Chico, we halted, and shortly had the ostrich cooking on a good fire. We looked back for Casimiro, but could not see him, so after supper and a smoke pursued our journey by the soft light of a young moon. We rode on until about nine P.M., when we reached the Indian encampment. We had been previously puzzled by seeing fires burning a considerable distance up the valley, and found that our chief, Camillo, had already marched in that direction. One of the first persons who accosted me was Arica, and I shortly discovered that [609]
all the Chilians[1] were installed with the Indians in different toldos, which was rather an unpleasant surprise. I was ushered into Orkeke's toldo with due ceremony, and we took our seats by the fire. I had brought a bag of coffee with 272
me, so we set to work and roasted some, after which one of

[1] [i.e. escaped prisoners—Analyst]

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the Chilians was given the task of pounding it between stones, and we all drank what the Indians not inappropriately term 'potwater.' Many Indians crowded in to have a look at us, and amongst others that I noticed was a remarkably pretty little girl of about thirteen years of age, a niece of Orkeke's, who took some coffee when offered in a shy and bashful manner which was delightful to contemplate. In due time we all retired to rest, and a little before daylight I was woke by the melodious singing of an Indian in the next toldo. Shortly afterwards Orkeke went out and harangued the inmates of the remaining toldos, and presently the horses were brought up, and most of the men started for the chase. Snow had fallen during the night, a biting cold wind was blowing, and Orkeke told me there were very few animals about. I took this as a hint not to ask for a horse, so contented myself with sauntering round and examining the encampment. Some of the men were playing cards, one or two sleeping, whilst the women were almost universally employed in sewing guanaco mantles. About three P.M., Casimiro arrived with his family, and proceeded to the tent of a southern Indian, named Crimè, and shortly afterwards the hunting party returned by twos and threes, but the chase had not been attended with much success. We passed the evening pleasantly enough, making acquaintance with each other, and Keoken, the little girl, instructed me in the Indian names of the various objects about the place. Next morning the order was suddenly given to march. As this was totally unexpected, and I was not prepared for departure, I made up my mind to return at once to Santa Cruz, and fetch my clothes and other small articles; also to take back a colt, promised by an Indian called 'Tchang' to Mr. Clarke. After some little difficulty, as the Indians did not wish me to go alone for fear of getting lost, or any other mischance befalling me, Graviel, the youngest son of Casimiro, started with me. We had to take the colt, what a sailor would term, in tow, that is, drag it for some distance with a lazo. As Graviel's

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As I saw no reason to believe this story, I declined to comply with the proposal of Casimiro, who, having consoled himself by begging a little coffee, took his departure, and the encampment was reduced to the toldo, of which I was to consider myself an inmate, and another, belonging to the only Indians who remained—Tankelow, Orkeke's brother, and his son, a youth of about eighteen. Besides these, there were three of the Chilian deserters who as narrated had escaped from Punta Arena; one was attached to the household of Tankelow, and the other two to that of Orkeke. One of these was Arica, already mentioned, who being a very clever worker in hide, had employed himself in adorning saddles and bridles for the Indians, by which he had acquired a pretty good stock of gear. The condition of all three was, however, not enviable. They had lowered themselves at first by volunteering to discharge the drudgery of fetching wood and water, and by this time were little better than slaves, obliged to perform the menial offices, which before had been the task of the women. These fair creatures, headed by Mrs. Orkeke—a young woman almost six feet in height, and displaying a corresponding breadth across the shoulders—employed themselves in cutting out and sewing guanaco mantles, weaving fillets for the head, and chattering. Tankelow and his son presently started for a hunt; but as I was not offered a mount, and deemed it more reasonable to give my only charger a good rest and feed, I could only accompany them to the river, the frozen surface of which they crossed, and disappeared up a cañon that led up the barranca, on the northern limit of the valley, to the Upper Pampa. Having wistfully watched them, I reconnoitred the valley of the Rio Chico. Behind me, to the south-east, the river wound through plains covered with withered coarse grass, some eighteen inches high, extending on either bank for several miles till terminated by the rising barranca. Snow lay here and there in patches on some of the higher ground, and increased the dreariness of the prospect. About

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060 returned early in the forenoon, with a large number of sea-fowl. Not long after, Captain Brownell announced his intention to go ashore, and commenced making preparations. He soon changed his mind, however, and asked me to go, in his stead, to procure some fresh provisions, if they were to be had. Knowing, from the reports of whalers and others, something of the savage character of the natives, I felt reluctant to venture; but afterwards, to oblige the captain, I complied.

•609 Taking our guns, a bag of bread, and some tobacco, four of us started for the shore. As we approached the beach, a crowd of black-looking giants came to the water's edge to gaze at us. We did not particularly fancy their looks, and lay on our oars for a considerable length of time. A recollection of the many ugly stories current about the Patagonians, their barbarous and cruel character, did not greatly fortify our confidence, or make us especially anxious for a personal acquaintance with them: We accordingly lay off in our boat, and, hailing them in Spanish, asked them if they had eggs, fowls, and beef. They replied, in broken Spanish, that they had plenty at their houses. I told them to produce their stores, and they should have plenty of bread in exchange. We parleyed with them for some time, till our boat at length touched the shore. I stood in the boat's stern, gun in hand, endeavoring to keep the natives from stealing, and warned the men not to leave the boat. They jumped ashore, promising not to stray from the spot. The Indians offered some skins for sale, which I paid for in bread. While my attention was diverted from them by this barter, the Indians were coaxing my men away. I looked about, and found only

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one man near me. He was despatched in pursuit of the others, and directed to bring them without delay. The tide at this point rises and falls forty-two feet. It was now ebb tide, the boat was fast grounding, and, it being large and heavily loaded, I was unable to get it off. The old chief and several other Indians crowded into it, and once in could not be got out. Persuasion was useless, and they were too many to be driven. In short, I was in their hands, and became immediately conscious of the difficulty and peril of my situation; — my men gone, I knew not where, the boat fast aground and crowded with the savages, while nearly a thousand of the tribe congregated upon the beach. What was before me, at the worst, I could only conjecture from report; and nothing but evil was reported of the creatures that surrounded me. What could I do? A question easier asked than answered.

After a long time, or what seemed such under circumstances that made minutes seem ages, one of my men came down, and asked permission to go to the Indian village, "a little way back from the shore," as they had been promised meat, eggs, and fowls. I ordered him to come immediately back to the boat. He persisted in urging his request, but it was so dangerously absurd that I absolutely refused. He then said he would inform his comrades of my refusal, and return immediately to the boat; but, for some cause, they seemed in no hurry to obey orders. Weary of waiting for them, and not without apprehension, I asked an Indian for the use of his horse, and rode with all speed after the fugitives. In the hurry of pursuit I inadvertently passed them, and tried to turn back my steed; but his inclinations were decidedly against a

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●609 retreat. While our opposing impulses kept us stationary for a moment, I descried my men approaching on horseback, behind the Indians. When they came up I urged them to return to the boat. They persisted in going with the savages. I remonstrated with them on the impropriety and danger of their course, but in vain. Their mouths watered for the meat and eggs they were told of. Their cunning guides had completely allayed suspicion, and even laid to sleep their common prudence. The Indians kept on their course, — the men followed, and I felt at my wits' end. I rode from one to another, talking as industriously and as urgently as I could. At last I gave them peremptory orders to return. The Indians had plainly lied to us. Their village, they said, was only a little way off; and yet we were three-fourths of a mile from the boat, and not a house was yet in sight. Determined to go back, if I had to go alone, I turned my horse's head.

At this point the mask was thrown off. The Indians seized my bridle, and arrested my progress. We all dismounted, with a view to retreat on foot, but before I could reach the man nearest to me the Indians had robbed him of his gun. With a mutual agreement to stand by each other in case of pursuit, we hastened our retrograde march, but had made no great distance when we saw the Indians coming after us. They rode in advance of us, halted in our front, and manœuvred to cut off our retreat; but by various zigzag movements, or boldly turning their horses' heads, we made considerable progress. Our foes, however, knew what they were at; it was only a question of time with them. A sudden and decided movement indicated a crisis. I drew my pistols (a pair of single-barrelled ones),

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but before I had time to cock one I was jumped upon from behind by some half-dozen of these monsters. One of them grasping a pistol by the barrel, I pointed it to his head and pulled the trigger. It missed fire, and I thank God that it did! Its discharge would have certainly killed him, and would as certainly have been revenged upon my life, probably upon the lives of my comrades. This is easily felt and said now; but at the moment, when excited by the struggle for liberty, and, as I feared, for life, with such dreaded enemies and at such formidable odds, it was quite another matter. 609●

The old chief now came up, took me firmly by the wrist, and said, "Usted no bono! usted habla varmano por me casa, mucho, mala hombre currarhae! mucho montaro hombre!"—by which specimen of choice Spanish he desired to inform me that we promised to go to their houses, and now would not go; that we were bad men and liars. His peculiarly thick and guttural pronunciation did not make the dialect more intelligible; but I was in a situation where criticism would have been rather out of place, and my ears were quickened by the revelations made to sight. I therefore promptly replied, that if he would restrain his men from violence, we would go where he pleased. They, meanwhile, grasped their knives, and looked as if they wanted to use them on our persons; but the chief told them, No, *not then;* he would get rum and tobacco for us first, and kill us afterwards. Whilst I was thus engaged, my nearest companion discovered his gun in the hands of an Indian who stood not far from where I was struggling. Rushing suddenly upon him, he succeeded in recovering his piece,—more by tact than force, for his antagonist, like all the [191]

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609 Patagonians, was very large and muscular. Then nimbly jumping aside, he told me to look out for myself. That was rather more than I felt able to do just at the moment. One Indian seized me by my arms and legs, some of them grasped my body, and others were busy investigating the contents of my pockets, and appropriating the same to their own use. And if he supposed himself able to show as much independence as he recommended me to, he was evidently mistaken. He had not elevated his gun to his face when the Indians were upon him, and wrenched it from his grasp. The old chief, all this time, held me tightly by the wrist, menacing his followers with his half-drawn cutlass, while I endeavored to bid for life and liberty. I told him he should have plenty of rum, tobacco, bread, flour, brass and beads, if he would carry us to the boat. At length he beat off my plunderers, and seemed on the point of yielding to my terms. He mounted his horse, and ordered me to get up behind him. I obeyed with alacrity, and fancied myself in a fair way to get out of trouble.

But, whatever may have been the chief's original intention, I had not gone far before his policy was diverted. One of the most audacious of the troop rode up, and insisted that I should not be allowed to return. I was the captain of the ship, he affirmed, and if I were restored they would get none of the promised rum and tobacco. The old savage seemed struck by this new suggestion, and halted. We then dismounted, and he led the horse up the hill, ordering me to follow. I was next directed to sit on the ground and wait further action. There I sat, looking alternately, with longing eyes, at the boat, and at our vessel riding at anchor in plain view. My three companions were soon

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brought to the spot, and I dismounted. And now began a more earnest negotiation. We offered large ransom, and after some higgling they agreed that three of our number might be released, but one must remain as a hostage; and I was pointed out as the one. I endeavored to have one of the others stay, and one actually agreed to; but his heart soon failed him, and I could see that he was using all his powers of persuasion to provide for himself. I assured him that I would use every effort in his behalf, if he would consent to remain for the present; but he evidently thought of the maxim, "A bird in the hand," &c., and was bent on making sure of his own safety first of all. Poor fellow! I cannot blame him for loving his own life, though, at the moment, it did seem rather hard that, after getting into the scrape by their own headstrong folly, against my entreaties and peremptory commands, they should extricate themselves from it at my expense, and leave me to bear the hardest of it! Very likely I might have done the same, if our cases had been reversed. And, even if one of them had offered to remain, it is very doubtful whether the substitution would have been permitted. The Indians too evidently regarded me as the chief prize, and were bent on retaining me as such. They insisted that I must stay while the other three should go for ransom, and I had nothing to do but to submit.

Three Indians each took a man with him on a horse, and started for the boat. I watched them as they went, with feelings that I will not attempt to describe. It seemed but too probable we should never meet again. A sense of desolation came over me, at the thought of being left alone in the power of these savages, of whose treachery and cunning

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609 I had already had such ample experience, and of whose cruelty I had heard so much. I felt that I was beyond the aid, if not cut off from the sympathy, of my associates. The falseness of the Indians to all their engagements, as I afterwards learned, was signally displayed towards my more fortunate comrades. They evidently had no intention of releasing any of us. Before reaching the boat, they halted, and refused to go any further, or allow our men to leave them. The prisoners, however, struggled desperately, and at length got clear of their captors. One rushed up to his neck in water, the others sprang into the boat, pushed off, and rescued him as he was struggling with the waves. They reached the schooner, told their tale, and represented my desperate situation. All hands commenced breaking up cargo, to get at the rum and tobacco for my ransom. Two boats were forthwith manned, provided with the required articles, and with plenty of arms and ammunition, and started for the shore. They got to the land a little before dark, and pulled into a cove, or slight indentation of the beach.

On catching sight of them, I desired the Indians to conduct me to the shore, and receive the ransom. But this they declined. They ordered me to the summit of an eminence near by, there to beckon the men to come ashore. An old skin was given me to wave as a signal. Perceiving that I was to be used as a decoy to lure the others into their treacherous snare, and secure them all as prisoners, I protested against this new breach of faith, and assured them that our men would not leave their boat, but that, if they wanted any rum and tobacco, they must take me to the shore To this, after a long palaver, and with visible

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reluctance they assented. The old chief ordered me to mount his horse, — this time reversing our relative positions; he made me sit on the rude apology for a saddle and guide the horse, while he took his seat behind, clasping both arms tightly around my body, and spurring his old nag forward. Thus mounted, and wondering what would be the next trick of the savages, I was conveyed to the shore, near the spot where the boats lay off on their oars. Driving as near them as possible, I hailed the men, — told them by no means to fire on the Indians, but to give them all they had promised. They asked what they should do with the articles. I turned to the chief, told him what the boats had brought, and once more asked if it was a satisfactory ransom. He said, Yes; if those articles were laid down, I should be released. But he was plainly resolved to have his pay in advance; he distrusted us too much to let me go first; and I need not say that my confidence in him was far from implicit. But, "Nothing venture, nothing have," — I directed the men to put the things ashore, which they did. The Indians greedily picked them up, and I claimed my release. The old rascal said, "he had not got *plenty* of rum yet, he must have a barrel." I insisted and struggled, but to no purpose. He kept a tight hold of my body, and when I begged that at least he would not squeeze me quite so painfully, he only redoubled his clasp. He obviously suspected, and I more than suspected, that it would not require a very great relaxation of his embrace to prompt a pretty decided movement on my part, for the effectual resisting of which the vicinity of the water was not altogether favorable. He now began spurring his old horse from the scene of action; I drew upon the bridle

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609 with my whole available force and weight; but the disparity between human strength and horse power, stimulated to its utmost by the spur, was too great. I begged the men in the boats to come again the next morning, and on no account to leave me, which they solemnly promised.

592 I was now hurried back into the country five or six miles, and at last reached an Indian village, and was set down by the old chief at his wigwam. He gave me in charge to one of his squaws, who ordered me into the hut and bade me sit down on the ground. While sitting there, and casting an inquisitive glance around the rude habitation, my attention was suddenly attracted to what appeared to be several pairs of eyes in a dark corner, shining with a strange brilliancy. I speculated silently on the sight, much doubting whether they belonged to human beings or to wild beasts; but, on carefully reconnoitring, I discovered that they belonged to three huge women. Further investigations disclosed a number of dark-skinned boys and girls, of divers ages and sizes, playing and [291] capering about the premises, in a state of perfect nudity. It took a considerable time to make out these, or any other objects, distinctly, owing to the darkness of the hut. Presently the chief, the patriarch of the tribe, entered [595] his habitation, and began a conversation, in his peculiar dialect, with his wives. He spoke in a low, guttural tone, in words the purport of which I could not gather. I was in no mood for conversation, but would have been much gratified by learning his version of the day's "stroke of business."

372 And now a few dry sticks and a bunch of dry grass were brought, mine host drew from a convenient repos-

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was inevitable. Some of the men were dashed violently upon the deck, others precipitated into the boiling surf, where they clung desperately to spars, and fragments of the wreck. While the confusion was wildest, and the dream of effort for escape was subsiding into the calmness of despair, I suddenly awoke, and for some time was unable to comprehend where I was, or how I came there. If I were indeed shipwrecked, I was also, like Jonah, vomited upon dry land. I drew my hand across my eyes to assure myself that vision was unobstructed, cast my eyes right and left;—the lodge, the ashes of the last night's fire, the chief and his motley family, the door through which the "lubber fiend" had followed me with his restless eyes, and into which the fierce dogs had driven me, recalled my distracted senses, and restored consciousness of a reality which, at the moment, I would almost have exchanged for the wildest terrors of my dream.

With the light calmer thoughts succeeded, and I once more addressed myself to the task of effecting my escape. The first thing was to get the chief with me to the shore, in readiness to meet a boat, and to renew negotiations for my liberty. Observing that he was awake, I began to promise him an abundant supply of the articles most tempting to his fancy, on condition of my release. He carelessly replied that he would go with me to the beach by and by. I tried to urge his departure, being anxious to go without the rabble at his heels the day before, but for whose violence he would now hardly be master of me; but there was no hurrying his movements. He took down his little cutlass, drew it from its brazen scabbard, and commenced sharpening it with a rusty file, trying its

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•609 [411] edge with his fingers as the work went on, and casting side glances at me the while. Whether this ceremony was the preface to some act of violence he meditated, or a scene for effect, to fill me with a wholesome dread of his power, I could not guess; but, determined to show no foolish fears, I thought it best to put a bold face upon the matter, and make an equally striking demonstration of courage and presence of mind, qualities which savages generally appreciate. I therefore approached him, tried the edge with my own fingers, praised the beauty of the instrument, and interested myself in the process of sharpening it. Following up my assault on his vanity, I extolled him as one of the best of men, and assured him that when we got to the shore I would amply reward him for his kindness to me; taking occasion, however, to throw in a hint on the vast importance of starting early. This I enforced by the suggestion that, when he got his good things, the fewer there were present, the fewer claimants there would be to divide the spoils.

After much coaxing, he started after his old horse; I mounted behind him, and we moved slowly off. When we arrived at the shore it was blowing a perfect gale. A boat could not live in the billows. All three vessels had dragged their anchors, and lay at some distance from their anchorage of yesterday. Bark Hebe appeared to be dragging towards the Orange Bank, a dangerous shoal. I afterwards learned that the Hebe, after getting into water as shoal as would barely float her, slipped her cables, put up a little sail, and finally succeeded in weathering the shoal and getting safely out to sea. The *J. B. Gager* was dragging in the same direction. My own vessel was

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holding on better than the others, and I hoped she would ride out the gale in safety.

I made my captors understand the reason why no boat had come, as promised; with which they appeared to be satisfied, and we returned as we came. By means of their broken Spanish, which they had picked up from sailors, and in visits to the Chilian or other Spanish American settlements, and by signs, amounting at times pretty nearly to a pantomime, I found myself able to understand inquiries or commands, and to make known my wishes.

Early on the following morning we again visited the shore, and I looked eagerly toward the anchorage, where all my hopes of deliverance centred. Not a vessel was in sight! Whether they had foundered, or were driven upon the shoal and wrecked, or had dragged out to sea in a disabled condition, — or whether my shipmates, the gale having subsided, had deliberately proceeded on their voyage, and left me a prey to cruel ravages and all the ills of this inhospitable shore, — I was unable to conjecture. I only knew that they were gone, and that I was left alone to the tender mercies of the Patagonians. No present means of escape appeared. The future, wisely hidden from my view, suggested none to my imagination. I told my captors the worst; that the high winds had probably sunk the ships, and all that were in them. At this intelligence they seemed delighted, and laughed immoderately, as if such a calamity were a consolation for the loss of their expected ransom. Their cruel glee could add nothing to the weight of my desolation. My past life was sealed up as if by an entrance on a new state

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chief's lodge. I was glad to dismount, sore with bestriding the skeleton of a horse.

Here I again took the liberty of proposing a trip to Port Famine, offering to go alone, if they would not go with me. The chief told me, with emphasis, to say no more about it. He would take me to "Holland," and there get rum and tobacco. "Only get me there," I said to myself, "and much good may your rum and tobacco do your old carcass!"

On the third day of our encampment here the tribe was divided, and I was sent off with one of the chief's lieutenants. A more blood-thirsty rascal could not be found in the tribe. This step was probably taken by the chief to get rid of my importunities to visit Port Famine, the frequent renewal of which had evidently worried him. My new guardian regaled my ears, from time to time, with stories of his murderous exploits, most likely in order to instil into me a wholesome dread of his power, and a submissive temper under his authority. The details of his bloody yarns are too shocking to repeat. One story, on which he seemed to dwell with peculiar satisfaction, as it was confirmed by more reliable authority afterwards, I will here relate, with such other particulars as I gained by subsequent information.

About two years before, the British brig Avon was in the Santa Cruz river. Captain Eaton, her commander, went on shore with his men, and bought some horses of the Indians, which he paid for in rum, tobacco and trinkets. After receiving their pay, they played the same trick as with me,—refused to deliver the horses. The captain was about getting under weigh, when the Indians, perceiving

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609 his intention to leave them, went down to the shore opposite the vessel, and beckoned him to come on shore, signifying that they would give up the horses, as agreed. The boat was sent ashore, and six or eight Indians returned in it to the brig. They surrounded the captain on the quarter-deck, and told him the horses were coming. He stepped to the rail with his glass, to observe motions on shore; while thus engaged, the savages came up behind, drew out their long knives, and stabbed him to the heart. He sunk lifeless on the rail, and fell upon the deck. Seizing him by the hair, and raising him partly on their knees, they cut his throat, and stabbed him again and again, to make the work of death sure. They then rushed upon the mate and stabbed him, but not mortally; he threw himself exhausted down the hatchway, and had just strength enough to secrete himself among the cargo. The boy was dealt with in the same manner as the captain, and one or two sailors, being wounded, succeeded, like the mate, in getting below deck and secreting themselves. The remainder of the crew were fortunately off in a boat at this time, and escaped the massacre. The savages ate and drank on board, and then plundered the brig of such articles as suited their fancy. Mr. Douglass, of "Holland," being on board the brig, was not murdered, but carried on shore and detained. A gentleman named Simms afterwards endeavored to effect the release of Mr. Douglass. He gave them all that they demanded as ransom, and was then himself detained to keep his friend company. A third embassy was undertaken by Mr. John Hall, of whom the reader will learn more hereafter. He paid a large ransom for his two friends, and was then served as they

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had been. He succeeded in effecting his escape the next day; but Douglass and Simms were carried off, murdered, and, it is supposed, — I believe with good reason, — that their bodies were eaten. The Avon, after being plundered, fell into the hands of the remainder of the crew, and sailed for Montevideo.

I travelled with this ruffian about ten days. He was a hard master, though I cannot charge him with personal ill-treatment that amounted to cruelty. Our life was monotonous enough. We slept a good share of the time when we rested, drank pure water when we could get it, and ate what fell in our way; though the reader may be assured that we saw some hungry days. At the expiration of ten days, the tribe was reünited at a place agreed upon. Here we continued several days, the natives occupied exclusively with gambling, which was alike their daily labor and recreation. When the demands of hunger became too imperative to be longer postponed, they would go out and hunt, after which they resumed their games.

Gambling is a vice to which they are greatly addicted, and they pursue it with a perseverance and ardor worthy of amateurs in more civilized communities. The implements used are bits of guanaco-skin, about the size of common playing-cards, on which are rudely depicted dogs and a variety of other beasts, with divers mystic marks and scrawls, done with a stick in a pigment composed of clay, blood and grease. Unlike their compeers in more enlightened circles, they put down stakes on only one side, for which the opposite players contend. In this way they rid themselves of their saddles, bridles, knives, and what ever other portable articles they may have to hazard

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000 in trees," or "books in the running brooks;" the land possesses neither in numbers sufficient to be conversable. "Sermons in stones," even, must have been of very pebbly dimensions, and of no great weight. Had this difficulty been removed, I confess I had no great desire to surmount it. I was the object of suspicion and hostility. My life was in constant danger. To diminish, as far as possible, the causes of dislike, to mitigate their ferocious hate, to elude occasions of mischief, to delay what I feared could not be very long prevented, was my continual study. If the reader is not satisfied with this account of my conduct, I am sorry for it, but cannot afford any words of contrition. It is vastly easier, I may hint to the objector, to prescribe another's duties than to judge of one's own, especially where the two parties are in circumstances so widely differing. The Patagonians need the gospel—and the law—as much as any people I could name from personal observation. There was no trace of instruction imparted at a previous period, and the reception Christianity would meet with among them is yet to be discovered.

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Their pipes are made of a hard red stone, the bowl dug out with whatever iron or steel implement is at command to the dimensions of an ordinary clay pipe, the stem about an inch square, and three inches long, with a small perforation. A copper or brass tube, about two inches long, is fitted to the stem, and serves as a mouth-piece. This is made by bending or hammering a metallic plate about a small round stick, and soldering or cementing it with a glutinous substance thickened with earth.

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The copper, brass and iron, seen among them, was probably procured from unfortunate vessels wrecked on their